

TESTIMONY on RAISED BILL NO. 6860
LCO No. 3649

Dear Committee on Human Services,

My name is Brita Darany von Regensburg and I am the founder /president of FAP (Friends of Autistic People) and I am also the mother of a young woman with profound autism.

I usually support most bills that improve the lives of adults with autism. Yet, the Act Concerning A Pilot Project to Improve Transitional Services for Employable Young Adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder is a commendable but poorly written draft of a bill. It is discriminatory to the majority of adults with autism in the State of Connecticut and FAP will support it only if the language is changed.

Section 1.(a) (1) defines young adults as persons not younger than 25 years of age and not older than 31 years of age. This is blatant age discrimination! What about the 23-year-old, the 33-year-old, or even the 43-year-old and older? What gives this bill the right to discriminate against the majority of adults with autism? It should define adults as those over 22 when they age out of the school system!

.(a) (2) defines employable as those capable of working not less than 20 hours / week. This point discriminates against those with disabilities who can work only 18, 15, or perhaps even only 10 hours /week. In our country we do not discriminate against those who have disabilities and they also need transitional services.

Section 1.(b) requests the Commissioners of Rehabilitation Services and of Developmental Services to establish a two-year pilot program limited to the Hartford and New Haven Counties. What about those individuals on the spectrum, who live in Fairfield County, Litchfield County and any other county of the State? On what basis would this bill want to spend CT State funds while it intends to discriminate against those who have the bad luck of living outside of the county where the State Capital is or of the county with the reputation of having the best pizza in the State? Does this bill seriously expect legislators from other counties to vote for this bill?

I urge the legislature to approve this bill only if the discriminatory language is eliminated, it is opened up for every adult on the autism spectrum. I also suggest that once approved the selection of the individuals selected for participation in the Pilot Program should be done through a transparent lottery conducted by an independent body.

Sincerely,